The Traditional Style
of Early Demotic Greek Verse

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The subject of formulaic repetition in early demotic Greek verse has often been raised, but till recently has not been seriously studied. In two articles, one on *Imberios and Margarona* and the other on the *Chronicle of the Morea*, we have tried to take the first steps in such an analysis.[1] It is now possible to give statistics for another long work from the same period, Ὁ Πόλεμος τῆς Τρωάδος, the *War of Troy*, and to examine their implications in the light of our previous discussion.

This text has remained unedited, except for a few brief excerpts. The *editio princeps* is now in press.[2]. There are seven

1. E. and M. Jeffreys, 'Imberios and Margarona: the manuscripts, sources and editions of a Byzantine verse romance', *Byzantion*, XLI (1971), 122–60; M. J. Jeffreys, 'Formulas in the Chronicle of the Morea', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XXVII (1973), 164–95 (cited hereafter as Formulas). To the bibliography given in these papers add: S. Baud-Bovy, *La Chanson populaire grecque du Dodécanèse*, I (Paris, 1936), pp. 342–64; D. A. Petropoulos, Στερεότυποι στίχοι δημοτικῶν τραγουδιῶν, in Προσφορὰ εἰς Σ. Κ. Κυριακίδην, Ἑλληνικά, Παράρτ., IV (Thessaloniki, 1953), 532–45; G. I. Kourmoules, Ἔπος καὶ ἐπικὴ ὕλη, Ἐπιστ. Ἐπετηρὶς Φιλοσ. Σχολ. Παν. Ἀθηνῶν, II, 5 (1954–5), 212–60; C. A. Trypanis, 'Byzantine oral poetry', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, LVI (1963), 1–3 (a seminal article, unaccountably missing from our previous bibliographies); D. Holton, Διήγησις τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου 'The Tale of Alexander', Βυζαντινὴ καὶ Νεοελληνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, I (Thessaloniki, 1974), pp. 56–7; A. Mohay, 'Schriftlichkeit und Mündlichkeit in der byzantinischen Literatur', *Acta Classica* (Debrecen), X–XI (1974–5), 175–82; G. Spadaro, 'Problemi relativi ai romanzi greci dell'età dei Paleologi', Ἑλληνικά, XXVIII (1975), 302–27.

2. All references to this text or to its individual manuscripts are by the numbering of the critical edition of E. M. Jeffreys and M. Papathomopoulos, to be published in the Βυζαντινὴ καὶ Νεοελληνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη. In cases of

115

witnesses to the text: four manuscripts cover substantially the whole of the poem, a fifth gives about half, and there are two fragments of about 700 and 100 lines. All these manuscripts differ from each other in nearly every line – a textual situation found often in early demotic verse.

This raises questions which are controversial in many mediaeval vernacular literatures. Do the manuscripts represent distinct versions, probably separate recordings of a fluid oral poem which had not reached the stability of a single fixed text? In that case, it would be impossible to reconcile them into a single version, and futile to make the attempt.[3] After much initial analysis, the editors of the *War of Troy* came to the conclusion that a single, written original text underlay all the versions. The chief reason was the fact that this poem is a translation of Benoit de Ste. Maure's *Roman de Troie*, which in various versions was translated into most of the early vernaculars of Europe.[4] The Greek follows its French original

ambiguity, references are preceded by *War of Troy*. Previous editions: D. I. Mavrophrydes, Ἐκλογὴ μνημείων τῆς νεωτέρας ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης (Athens, 1866), pp. 183–211 (prints MS. B, Parisinus Graecus 2878, for lines 323–670, 801–1020, 7014–53, 7116–312, 10412–57); G. A. Gidel, *Etudes sur la littérature grecque moderne* (Paris, 1866), pp. 197–229 (MS. B for 335–9, 364–6, 388–90, 400–8, 411–598, 625–32, 738–40, 801–6, 3397–428); L. Politis, Ποιητικὴ Ἀνθολογία, I: Πρὶν ἀπὸ τὴν Ἅλωση (Athens, 1967), pp. 134–7 (text critically established of lines 7117–230; in the second edition [Athens, 1975], the same lines are republished with corrections on the basis of the Jeffreys–Papathomopoulos edition); L. Politis, Δύο φύλλα ἀπὸ χειρόγραφο τοῦ 'Πολέμου τῆς Τρωάδος', Ἑλληνικά XXII (1969), 227–34 (publishes MS. R, a fragment from the Vrondis collection covering lines 2671–752, with corrections and variants from MSS. B and X, Bologna Univ. Gr. 3567).

3. This view is forthrightly put by C. A. Trypanis in his review of E. Trapp's edition of *Digenis Akritas, Gnomon*, XLVI (1974), 614–17. For different analyses of the problem see A. Sigalas, 'Révision de la méthode de restitution du texte des romans démotiques byzantins', *Annuaire de l'Inst. de phil. et d'hist. orient. et slaves de l'Université de Bruxelles*, XI (1951), 365–410, and H.-G. Beck, 'Die Volksliteratur', in H. Hunger et al., *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung*, I (Zurich, 1961), pp. 470–93.

4. *Roman de Troie*, 6 vols., ed. L. Constans (Paris, 1904–12); references to the text are to this edition, by line-number alone. For the wide influence of this romance see G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1949), pp. 50–5; H. Buchthal, *Historia Troiana* (London, 1971), pp. 1–8. The following discussion of textual relationships between Greek and French versions is summarized from the introduction to the forthcoming edition, where full documentation is

116

with some abbreviation (about 30,000 French octosyllables become rather more than 14,000 fifteen-syllable lines of Greek), and a good deal of simplification. Nevertheless, it is usually possible to relate every phrase of Greek to the corresponding French phrase from which it was translated. The similarity of model and translation is often close enough to solve quite subtle problems of alternative phraseology in the Greek manuscript tradition, as well as simpler difficulties like variant versions of names. An accurate translation on this scale seems to us unlikely on *a priori* grounds to have taken place within a purely oral framework. As we shall see, the translation seems to have been adapted only in part to fit a new series of oral phrase-patterns. It is difficult to escape the hypothesis of a single written Greek translation.

In addition, there is significance in the nature of the manuscript variants found in the Greek text. They are very numerous, and lines where surviving manuscripts are unanimous are quite rare. But the great majority of variants are relatively trivial, involving a change in verb tenses, for example, or alternative forms of names, or replacement of one preposition by another. Most affect single words; few alter as much as a half-line. A line-concordance of the manuscripts would show an overwhelming majority of cases where all versions agree for long passages on the number and general shape of the lines given, in spite of constant variation in individual words. One might expect true oral variants to show less line-by-line correspondence and perhaps more stability of phrasing within the line.[5]

Finally, there is the fact that the manuscripts fall into a clear stemmatic pattern, if one ignores trivial variants and concentrates on the comparatively rare occasions when complete lines are omitted or added. The existence of the French original puts the editors in a fortunate position. When the manuscripts disagree over the inclusion or omission of a line, it is usually possible to decide whether it is an example of a

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given. (For a fuller summary see E. M. Jeffreys, 'The Manuscripts and Sources of the *War of Troy*', *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines 1971*, III (Bucharest, 1976), 91–4.

5. Cf. A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), pp. 99–123 (cited hereafter as *Singer*).

lacuna in some of the manuscripts, or of an insertion in the remainder. Thus one can sometimes be certain that a particular group of manuscripts agree in a stemmatically significant common error. The stemma has been tested over the whole poem, and has convinced the editors that it is a trustworthy means of recovering the general shape of an original text, in spite of constant difficulties with details. Their experience in establishing more than 14,000 lines of text with an enormous critical apparatus has left them in no doubt that the surviving manuscripts derive from a single original, which was almost certainly a written translation from the French model.

We have gathered formulaic statistics from the text thus established. There has been no attempt at a full formula count as was done for the *Chronicle of the Morea* and its statistical control the *Alexander* poem.[6] Once the general principle has been established that one poem in this metre and style is full of formulas and another is not, it is easy to extend the principle to cover another poem by taking samples. Three fifty-line passages were selected (1026–75, 9157–206, 11349–99), chosen by three criteria: that they should be widely spaced, attested in as many manuscripts as possible, and should be a balanced mixture of speech, battle and other narrative, reflecting the mixture of the whole poem. All the rest of the text was searched for phrases parallel to those in the samples.[7] The minimum length for a formula and the accuracy of repetition demanded are those established in the analysis of the *Chronicle of the Morea*.[8] Basically, a formula should fill at least a half-line of a fifteen-syllable political verse with a phrase which is substantially identical with another.

Of the 300 half-lines in the sample, 88 have been found repeated more or less exactly elsewhere; in other words, 29·3 per cent of the samples is certainly formulaic within our definition of the term. A further 17 half-lines, or 5·7 per cent of the samples, are borderline cases, narrowly excluded on a strict

6. Formulas, 175–7.

7. We must record grateful thanks to Miss Isabella Tsavari, of the University of Ioannina, who shared with us the labour of searching for formulas in the *War of Troy*.

8. Formulas, 175.

118

interpretation of the definition.[9] Thus many people would accept a total of 35 per cent of formulas. These figures of 29·3 per cent and 35 per cent may be compared directly with 31·7 per cent and 38·4 per cent, the figures found in the *Chronicle of the Morea*.[10] It is noticeable that the two earlier examples from the *War of Troy* give much higher figures, which are forced down by a comparatively unformulaic third sample. This can be related to a marked change in the texture of the poem around line 11090, corresponding to a major break in Benoit's French narrative, as he changes sources from Dares of Phrygia to Dictys of Crete. Strangely at this point the Greek translation becomes more literal and less careful in ensuring that it makes sense without reference to its original. Formulas become noticeably fewer, as is demonstrated in the third sample. It is easy to make hypotheses about the reason for this change in the translator's technique, but almost impossible to evaluate them. Here we are interested only in formulaic density. It is fair to say that for its first 11,000 lines the *War of Troy* is no less formulaic than the *Chronicle*.

Equally interesting indices of the density and type of formulas found in the poem may be derived from a list of its more commonly repeated half-lines. The following are repeated (within the limits described above) 12 times or more in the whole poem: ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν (28 examples); καλοὺς καβαλαρίους (25); καὶ κονταρέα(ν) τὸν ἔδωκε (24); ὅσον τινὰς οὐκ εἶδε (23); ἠθέλαν οὐκ ἠθέλασι (21); μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης (20); ἐδῶκαν κονταρέας (20); Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος (first half) (20); ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων βασιλεύς (19); μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι (18); ἀπὸ τὸν θάνατόν σου (18); εἰς τὸν ἄπαντα κόσμον (18); πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν (18); ἀπάνω εἰς τὸ σκουτάρι (15); καλλιότερος οὐκ ἦτον (15); εἰς γῆν ἀποθαμένος (14); ὅσον ἠμπόρει πλέον (14); κακὰ τὸν ὑπαγαίνει (14); καὶ ἀπὸ τὰ δύο μέρη (14); ταῦτα τὸν συντυχαίνει (14); τὸ σκουτάριν ἐπέρασε (14); καὶ τί νὰ λέγω τὰ πολλά (13); πίπτει ἀποθαμένος (13); χαρὰν μεγάλην εἴχασι (13); ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ λουρίκιν (13); ζημίαν μεγάλην κάμνει (13); ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας (13); ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν σωμάτων (13); ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς μου (13);

9. Breakdown of figures, by half lines: (i) 1026–75: 37 definite, 6 borderline; (ii) 9157–206: 33 definite, 4 borderline; (iii) 11349–99: 18 definite, 7 borderline.

10. Formulas, 190.

119

τίποτε μὴ φοβᾶσαι (13); Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος (second half) (12); χαρὰν μεγάλην εἶχαν (12); μετὰ τοῦ Μενελάου (12); καὶ τότε νὰ εἶδες πόλεμον (12); εἰς ὅλον τὸ περίγειον (12); ὁποῦ τοὺς ἠγαποῦσαν (12); κρατώντα τὸ σπαθί του (12); ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς ὁ θαυμαστός (12).

This list may be compared directly with that compiled from the *Chronicle of the Morea*.[11] It must be borne in mind, of course, that the *War of Troy* is more than half as long again as the *Chronicle*: more than 14,000 lines for the former and less than 9,000 lines in manuscript H of the latter. It is no surprise, therefore, that the number of items in the list above (38) is larger than the equivalent figure for the *Chronicle* (26 phrases repeated 12 times or more). In fact on simple statistical grounds one would expect a rather larger difference. It is surprising that no phrases in the *War of Troy*, even if we combine the two half-line formulas for Telamonian Ajax to make a total of 32, are more than one half as frequent as ὁ πρίγκιπα Γυλιάμος (62 examples) from the *Chronicle*. With these qualifications, one may conclude that there is little difference between the two texts with respect to their most frequent formulas.

We must now pass from statistics to their interpretation. What can a formula count tell us about the nature of the poem, the poet and his audience? Does this technique have a serious place in the literary analysis of such texts? Some conclusions on this subject have already been stated for the *Chronicle*,[12] but they must now be refined a little on the basis of the new figures.

There seems to be little room for compromise on this issue across the whole spectrum of early vernacular literatures. The most commonly voiced opinions take the form of thesis and refutation – those who accept the validity in mediaeval studies of the theories of Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord,[13] and those who do not.[14] Those who count formulas believe almost

11. Formulas, 178–81 (but note that that table includes all repetitions with more than *eight* examples).

12. Formulas, 191–5.

13. See E. R. Haynes, *Bibliography of Oral Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973).

14. Among the most aggressively negative views one may cite M. Delbouille, 'Les chansons de geste et le livre', in *La Technique littéraire des chansons de geste* (Actes du Colloque de Liège, Paris, 1959), pp. 295–407, and I. Siciliano, *Les Chansons de geste et l'épopée* (Turin, 1968), esp. pp. 137–99.

unanimously that they are measuring an important parameter of poetic style. Most would agree with Lord that a high formulaic count tells the researcher a good deal about the creator of a given version of a poem. He must be an oral poet, accustomed to performing songs before an audience, and in some sense re-creating them at each singing. He is most unlikely to be literate, for the skills of reading and writing would have given him the idea of a fixed, 'correct' text to be learned by heart, and would have removed his reliance on formulas. He probably felt no need himself to preserve his poem in writing. Quite possibly the surviving manuscript is the descendant of an 'oral dictated text', which would have been dictated to a scribe in a slow parody of his usual oral performance.[15']

Others have challenged this point of view on practical grounds, showing that some of these conclusions cannot be applied to some poems with high formulaic content. Thus, since the supporters of the oral-formulaic theory tend to insist that their conclusions be accepted as a whole, the entire technique of formula counting has been somewhat discredited as a tool of literary criticism.[16]

The present study of formulas in the *War of Troy* seems to confirm the latter view rather than the former. The editors of the text, for reasons detailed above, have been compelled to conclude that the surviving manuscripts derive from a single original. This original was a fairly accurate translation over many thousands of lines, which seems to suggest the normal processes of literary translation. But the poem has a percentage of formulas which would classify it as an oral poem by most of the standards set by Lord and his colleagues.[17] Such a situation is by no means unique in mediaeval literature,[18] but cannot to

15. The basis for these judgements is laid by Lord, *Singer*, and they are applied to mediaeval epic in Chapter 10 of that work, pp. 198–221.

16. A sketch of the lines of conflict in mediaeval studies, designed particularly for application to early demotic poetry, was attempted in Formulas, 168–75.

17. See A. B. Lord, 'Homer as Oral Poet', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, LXXII (1967), 20–1 (cited hereafter as *Homer as Oral Poet*); J. J. Duggan, 'Formulas in the *Couronnement de Louis*', *Romania*, LXXXVII (1966), 343–4; idem, *The Song of Roland* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1973), pp. 29–30.

18. Several cases, for example, of formulaic translations into Anglo-Saxon are given by L. D. Benson, 'The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic

our knowledge be paralleled in surviving traditions of oral poetry. Even allowing for unsuspected differences between oral and literary societies, and the consequent danger of applying literate prejudices to an oral situation, we find ourselves unable to draw the conclusion that the translator of the *War of Troy* was illiterate; in fact it seems almost incontrovertible that his motives in preserving his translation on paper were quite conventional, and that he wrote it down himself. Though these facts are unprovable, they are equally beyond disproof, especially by arguments which equate nineteenth- and twentieth-century oral societies with those which produced mediaeval literature.

It seems that we must picture a literate man translating a written French text into a written Greek original *War of Troy*. In that case, what is the use of formulaic analysis of the resulting text? If the conclusions conventionally drawn from a high formula count must always be accepted as a whole, then the hypothesis of a literate writer would seem to deny the relevance of the whole technique. It is time to pass from such negative probing of the inflated claims of the Parry–Lord method to examine its central core of undoubted significance.

It cannot be pointed out too often that poems with high formulaic percentages appear always at the same stage of literary history, when a new language or a new linguistic stratum is first written down.[19] We cannot accept this as a coincidence, a series of conscious choices by many individual poets widely separated in time and place. In our view the statistical evidence of the formulas in the *War of Troy* witnesses as cogently to the nature of its style as does the existence of the French original, which imposes the conclusion of a literary origin. Formulas only appear in such numbers in poems closely connected with a tradition of oral poetry. The translator has written a 'transitional' text between oral and written poetry – a written poem with most of the features of oral style.

Poetry', *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, LXXXI (1966), 334–41, and for Middle English by A. C. Baugh, 'Improvisation in the Middle English Romance', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CIII (1959), 431–4.

19. This point is probably best made by the huge range of C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* (London, 1952), esp. pp. 215–53.

Lord has found no such transitional texts in Yugoslavia, and has concluded that they are unlikely to have existed in ancient or mediaeval societies either. He believes that literacy will always tend to destroy an oral poet's abilities and to reduce the formulaic content of his work. At times, he appears to argue that sheer numbers of formulas *prove* the illiteracy of the composer of the poem.[20] But it seems to us that there are so many cultural differences between twentieth-century Yugoslavia and mediaeval societies, many of them centring on this very question of literacy, that Lord's analogy cannot be regarded as conclusive. The fact that no transitional texts are found in Yugoslavia does not give decisive evidence about their existence in Greek lands during the late Byzantine period.

Whereas a Serbian oral poet would be taught to read a language close to his own spoken idiom, the translator of the *War of Troy* is unlikely to have learned to read by using popular texts, for prose in demotic Greek was not written systematically till much later, and manuscripts of verse texts in the vernacular were not common. Education was regularly conducted at a more learned linguistic level roughly corresponding to the position of Latin in Western mediaeval education.[21] Surely it would be easier for him than for his Yugoslav counterpart to keep his skill in vernacular verse free from the influence of his formal literary training? Further, manuscript seems less likely to impose on a poet the corrupting idea of a fixed text than would a printed page. Indeed, if one looks at the surviving manuscripts of the *War of Troy* (or of any other mediaeval vernacular poem early in the literary history of the language concerned),[22] it is most unlikely that they could ever have imposed upon their readers the concept of a stable text. The appearance of the page naturally varies greatly. There is no standardization of

20. E.g. *Singer*, pp. 130–3, but cf. *Homer as Oral Poet*, p. 13: 'Literary poets who imitate oral poetry exist. I have not found as yet a literate oral poet, that is to say a good oral poet who has learned to write, who has in fact written either imitations of oral poetry or oral poetry.'

21. This is a rash statement, given the diversity and obscurity of the societies in which the earliest demotic texts were produced. One can only say that we know of no indication before the sixteenth century of the use of vernacular Greek in education.

22. See the various mediaeval vernaculars studied in H. Hunger et al., *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung* (Zurich, 1961).

orthography, so that the spelling fluctuates alarmingly in almost every word. Worse still, as we have said, there is no accuracy in the preservation of the words and grammatical forms of the text. In our opinion, this is not a case of literacy imposing its rigid standards upon a fluctuating oral tradition, but the reverse. The fluidity of the tradition has been carried over into its written expression, probably because the writers of the manuscripts recognized an oral style which did not demand word-for-word reproduction. Finally, one must point to the value and cultural status of the manuscript as against the printed book. It is unlikely that our translator had access to a big library, for obvious financial reasons. Even the books he was able to read are statistically unlikely to have included many texts of vernacular poetry, which were quite rare before the invention of printing. To make an obvious but relevant point, he cannot have read a copy of the *War of Troy* in Greek before he himself wrote down the poem for the first time. Compare his position with that of the Yugoslav oral poet in the 1930s, in a society with many printed books, who probably learned to read as part of a government literacy drive, using texts of oral songs in his own repertoire.[23] To our minds it is not surprising that literacy should undermine oral style in such circumstances. This is no proof that the same occurred in a mediaeval situation.

We would like to suggest that the translator of the *War of Troy* lived in a society whose literature of entertainment was at an oral level, expressed in a similar metre, style and language to those which he used in his translation. It is impossible to say whether or not he himself was a performer of this oral poetry, an 'oral singer' as defined by Lord. Certainly his mind was fully attuned to its rhythms and patterns of expression. There was probably no other conveniently available metre and style for so long a work;[24] it may have had the virtue of attracting a popular

23. Lord, *Singer*, pp. 136–7. In *Homer as Oral Poet*, pp. 2–3, note the instructive case of the Moslem priest in the region of Pešter who learned his songs from his father. 'After [he] had read the songbook versions of songs he had learned from his father, he changed his father's version to agree with those in the songbook. Fortunately a fair number of songs that his father sang are not in the songbooks.' Not only did the translator of the *War of Troy not* find the poem in a songbook, he lived in a society with very few written versions of any work in the style and metre of contemporary oral poetry.

24. On the importance of the fifteen-syllable political verse in early demotic

124

audience. His poem thus takes on most of the features of contemporary oral poetry, including its high level of formulas. He may have felt some positive aesthetic value in their use, but more likely they came to him as an unavoidable aspect of the style. No doubt formulas were of some help in his composition, for they had, inevitably, convenient metrical shapes. He would not, of course, have had the same *compulsion* to use them as an oral singer, whose songs must be constantly recollected and recomposed before an audience. But the number of formulas used seems not to have been reduced significantly.

One may see how the poet's mind worked by comparing his translation with its original. Benoit's work is certainly not free of repetitions, though his style has progressed from the formulaic *chanson de geste* towards the more literary manner of the *roman courtois*:[25] the assonantal *laisse* has given place to rhyming couplets, and decasyllables to octosyllables. Sometimes Benoit's formulas are reflected by Greek formulas, and may have prompted them. We have examined the French text at points corresponding to the 32 examples of *Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος* in the *War of Troy*, used as a formula in both halves of the line. Twice one finds a full-line equivalent phrase 'Telamonius Aïaus' (5619 = *War of Troy* 2273; 7341 = 3061). Seven times Benoit uses the six-syllable formula 'Telamon Aïaus' (10131 = *War of Troy* 4165; 20579 = 9243; 23813 = 10816; 24544 = 11183; 25828 = 11968; 26609 = 12489; 28559 = 13562), and eight times the four-syllable hemistich formula 'Reis Telamon'[26] (8970 = *War of Troy* 3712; 9297 = 3826; 9920 = 4048; 13518 = 5786; 18593 = 8128; 20546 = 9231; 20960 = 9381; 23648 = 10737). Twice the two different Ajaxes (frequently confused in both texts) are coupled in the French line 'E Telamon e Aïaus', which is reflected in the Greek by the regular formula for Telamonian Ajax alone (11306 = *War of Troy* 4686; 18866 = 8244). At the first reference to the

literature, see M. J. Jeffreys, 'The Nature and Origin of the Political Verse', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XXVIII (1976), pp. 142–95, esp. pp. 161, 173.

25. See the relevant pages of standard histories, e.g. J. Roger and J.-E. Payen, *Histoire de la littérature française*, I (Paris, 1969), pp. 48–9; J. Fox, *A Literary History of France: the Middle Ages* (London, 1974), pp. 134–9.

26. Though brief in comparison with Greek formulas, this phrase fills a regular division of the line and so meets the requirements of the formulaic definition.

125

hero, Benoit distinguishes him from the other Ajax who has just been mentioned:

> Mais un autre Aïaus i ot
> Qui Telamon en sornon ot.
> Icist fu mout de grant valor (5187–9)

The Greek translator responds with

$$\text{Aἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος ἦτον πολλῆς ἀξίας (2106).}$$

But there is no need for both 'Aïaus' and 'Telamon', for a whole line or hemistich formula in French to trigger the Greek formula. It responds six times to 'Telamon' alone (8876 = *War of Troy* 3659; 8947 = 3704; 13092 = 5525; 14494 = 6225; 23967 = 10889; 24016 = 10906), and four times to 'Aïaus' alone (6638 = *War of Troy* 2795; 8222 = 3349; 9432 = 3877; 22560 = 10237). Twice the Greek uses the formula in inserted information on Ajax's actions not recorded by Benoit (*War of Troy* 1131, 10091). These are the only occasions when the Greek formula does not have an immediate trigger in the French.

It seems plain with this phrase – and the point will be amply confirmed later – that the frequent use of a formula in the Greek is not prompted by the nature of the French text. Formulas in the French are shorter, less numerous, and more varied in shape. Why therefore did the translator so often refer to Ajax with the same phrase, and where did he get it from? If his source were oral poetry, we must postulate the existence in the fourteenth century of oral songs on the Homeric story. In spite of the frequency of Homeric names and distorted Homeric material among the written remains of popular literature from the period,[27] this hypothesis seems to us unlikely. In particular, it is obvious that many of Benoit's characters and events, the standard elements of the Troy story, were unfamiliar to the

27. Especially in the *Achilleis*, ed. D. C. Hesseling, *L'Achilléide byzantine* (Amsterdam, 1919); *Troas*, eds. L. Norgaard and O. L. Smith, *A Byzantine Iliad* (Copenhagen, 1975); and Constantine Hermoniakos, *La Guerre de Troie*, ed. E. Legrand (Paris, 1890), where Achilles, Priam, Agamemnon, Paris, etc., appear.

126

Greek translator.[28] A more likely source is the Σύνοψις Ἱστορικὴ of Constantine Manasses, the Trojan section of which was plainly known to him.[29] Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος is found there in the first half of line 1399. But the elements of the phrase are so simple that the translator could easily have invented it. Whatever the source, we would suggest that its regular use as a formula demonstrates the existence of pressures towards a formulaic style. Though oral tradition can hardly have supplied the formula itself, it probably developed in the translator the habit of using and even coining such formulas. This simple, functional phrase, an economical means of reference to an apparently unfamiliar hero, marks one end of a continuum of formula types found in the *War of Troy*.

At the other end of the continuum are some formulaic clichés found far and wide through early demotic literature. Some, like μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης,[30] are so simple in construction and so like many other phrases which fill the same part of the fifteen-syllable line that their existence passes almost unnoticed. Others, especially μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι,[31] have a more idiosyncratic pattern which marks them off more definitely as formulas. Both of these, and several more, are accepted as clichés even by those who reject an oral-formulaic basis for the style of these poems.[32] They are discounted, for example, in discussions of borrowings from one poem to another.

We have looked for triggers in the French text at points where the Greek uses μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης. There are words and

28. E.g. Αἰνεάς (Αἰνείας), Ἀλτάβιος (Ταλθύβιος), Ἀνθενώρ (Ἀντήνωρ), Δάρειος (Δάρης), Ἐλενής (Ἕλενος), Ἐρκούλιος (Ἡρακλῆς), Ἰνδομενεύς (Ἰδομενεύς), Καλκάς (Κάλχας), Κουβά (Ἑκάβη), Λαομήδης (Λαομέδων), etc., etc.

29. There are several quotations of single lines, unmistakable because of their formal linguistic level: e.g.

καί ταῦτα μέν ἐνταῦθα μοι καί μέχρι τούτων στήσω

(*War of Troy* 739, cf. Σύνοψις Ἱστορικὴ 18). See also *War of Troy* 10094–5, 13245, cf. Σύνοψις Ἱστορικὴ 1406–7, 1325.

30. Twenty examples in the *War of Troy*; cf. the list given by Mohay, op. cit., p. 177.

31. There are more than one hundred examples of this formula in our files, including eighteen in the *War of Troy*. Cf. E. and M. Jeffreys, op. cit., p. 147; Holton, op. cit., p. 56; Mohay, op. cit., p. 177; Spadaro, op. cit., p. 326.

32. E.g. Spadaro, op. cit., pp. 325–6.

127

phrases indicating willingness to perform an action (mout le desir 2013, cf. *War of Troy* 709; volentiers 8942, cf. 3699; 28099, cf. 13368); pleasure (joiant e lié 25461, cf. 11713; joios 28099, cf. 13368; a gré 28326, cf. 13415); amiability (bonement 881, cf. 90) and respectful· acceptance (a grant honor 28277, cf. 13382). Once a similar meaning is implied less explicitly (il trestoz les enmercie 945, cf. 123) and once the Greek phrase is inserted redundantly, duplicating an accurate word-for-word translation of the idea of respectful service in the French text (E honorent e servirent 28109, cf. . . . τὸν ἐδέχθησαν μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης, ἐδούλευσαν, ἐτίμησαν . . . 13377–8). More often than not, however, the Greek formula has no precise equivalent in the French, though the general situation may be similar to one of those listed above (1464, cf. *War of Troy* 425; 1543, cf. 474; 3273, cf. 1349; 4809, cf. 1946; 5720, cf. 2312; 13018, cf. 5495; 13886, cf. 5950; 26265, cf. 12264; 27260, cf. 12878; 28340, cf. 13424; 28461, cf. 13489).

The other common cliché mentioned earlier, μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι, is a slightly more striking phrase than μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης, with a more complex range of relationships to equivalent phrases in the French text. The most complete parallel is:

> Les reis loë toz un e un
> E tot l'autre peuple comun
> (26251–2, cf. *War of Troy* 12256)

where the two ideas of 'small' and 'great' are both represented in each text. Sometimes the French original refers only to μικροί and not to μεγάλοι, as in 'tuit nostre vassal' (25934, cf. 12038), or its negative equivalent 'en l'ost n'ot si povre Grezeis . . .' (26797, cf. 12527). At other times the idea of μεγάλοι predominates: 'Seignor e vesque e pere e maistre' (13738, cf. 5893) and

> Li haut home e li preisié,
> Li duc, li prince e li demeine
> Li amiraut e li chataine
> (18146–8, cf. 7895).

128

Such lists are the closest approximations which may be found in the French text to the wording of the Greek formula.

That formula's basic semantic content is, of course, 'all' or 'every', and so it is no surprise to see that it responds to 'tuit' (19129 twice, cf. 8407; 25934, cf. 12038), 'tote' (28423, cf. 13468), 'trestuit' (2205, cf. 812), 'maint' (23157 twice, cf. 10517), and even 'comunaument' (25001, cf. 11456). Other parallel phrases are 'cil de la navie' (5866, cf. 2382) and 'l'ost' (26845, cf. 12567 and 26894, cf. 12604). It is noticeable that in the examples referred to in this paragraph the sense of 'all' is nearly always conveyed by a form of the words πᾶς or ὅλος in the first half of the Greek line of which μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι forms the second half. This cliché is thus added, as it were, as a reflex, to emphasize the idea 'all', not usually to give it its first expression. The clearest case of this sort arises at 23795–9 (cf. 10799–802), where the French text is fully represented in the Greek without the cliché, which has been added to the previous line:

> Li dameiseau fu mout joïz
> Et a grant honor recoilliz.
> En l'ost nen ot si orgoillos,
> Si riche ne si desdeignos,
> Qui encontre ne li alast . . .

> Ὁ νέος ἦν χαιράμενος μετὰ μεγάλης φήμης.
> Οἱ πάντες τὸν ἐδέχθησαν, μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι.
> Τόσα οὐκ ἦτον ἀλαζών, βασιλεὺς ἐπηρμένος,
> νὰ μὴ ὑπάγῃ εἰς συνάντησιν τοῦ υἱοῦ Ἀχιλλέως.

There remain four cases where there seems to be no word or idea in the French text to explain the existence of μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι in the Greek: 3176 (cf. 1301), 20346 (cf. 9108), 26253 (cf. 12258, though here notice that there has been another occurrence of the Greek formula at 12256), 27167 (cf. 12813).

All the innumerable repeated phrases of the *War of Troy* must fall somewhere between the two extreme categories we have examined: Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος, which is most unlikely to have been an oral formula, and μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης and μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι, which almost certainly were. Our judgement about the nature of this poem will depend to a great extent on the difficult

129

decision as to which of the two categories is predominant. The question may be put in the following way: do we have in this poem a real insight into the subject-matter and phraseology of the oral tradition, as well as its style? Or do we have a work in which the translator-poet's own clichés have been converted into formulas by the pressures of the traditional genre he chose to follow – where repeated phrases derived perhaps from his reading or from the French original are more numerous than those which are direct oral borrowings? Can we, for example, take the martial formulas which are so dominant in the *War of Troy* and combine them with the name formulas for Moreot heroes which are equally dominant in the *Chronicle*,[33] and assume that these are separate reflections of oral verse in the fourteenth century? Are these poems, taken together, evidence for martial songs about the heroes of the Frankish Morea? If so, we could assume that the *Chronicle* took some regular oral heroes and portrayed them in an unfamiliar context of legal and diplomatic wrangling, while the *War of Troy* placed unfamiliar Homeric heroes in a regular oral context of chivalrous warfare.

This final suggestion, however beguiling, is quite unprovable in present circumstances. Even the earlier questions are very difficult to answer, because of the enormous scope of the evidence required to support every detail of the case. To show, for example, that a given phrase was probably an oral formula, it must be found repeated in, say, three or four texts of this period. To show the converse – that a phrase repeated within the *War of Troy* was probably coined by the translator himself – is more difficult still. Unless there is evidence from the nature of the phrase (as with formulas for Homeric heroes), one must be able to assert that it is not found repeated in other texts. Such a statement could only be supported by formulaic analysis of a very large body of verse. In spite of these serious problems, however, it is possible to make a few preliminary remarks on the question.[34] The rest of this paper will attempt to do so.

33. See the lists on pp. 119–20 above, and Formulas, 178–81.

34. Evidence for the use of phrases outside the *War of Troy* is cited from the following editions:

Ach.: L'Achilléide byzantine, ed. D. C. Hesseling (Amsterdam, 1919);

Belis.: 'Il poema bizantino del Belisario', ed. E. Follieri, *La poesia epica e la sua formazione* (Accad. Naz. dei Lincei, anno CCCLXVII, 1970), quad, 139, 583–61;

Chron. Mor.: The Chronicle of the Morea, ed. J. Schmitt (London, 1904);

130

Let us begin systematically from the oral end of the continuum, by examining some phrases with a more specific meaning than those so far considered. For example, the question *Τί νὰ λέγω τὰ πολλά;* with a *καί* at the beginning or a pronoun after *νά* to make up the necessary eight syllables, occurs thirteen times in the *War of Troy* and frequently elsewhere.[35] Formally, of course, this is a personal intervention by the poet to abbreviate his text, and sometimes it corresponds to similar phrases in the French, as in 'Que t'en fereie lonc sermon' (1381, cf. *War of Troy* 372), 'Que vos ireie porloignant' (16984, cf. 7407) and 'Quos en fereie lonc sermon' (26003, cf. 12084). The most common parallels in the French text, however, are first- or third-person comments with a variety of rather different meanings, like 'Ne nus nel vos savreit retraire' (2772, cf. 1112), 'Co set om bien' (11672, cf. 4846) or 'Solonc l'Autor en dirai veir' (18877, cf. 8248). Here the Greek phrase seems to represent a reaction to the existence of a comment in the French original, not to the meaning of the comment. On three other occasions (486, 1896, 8241) there seems to be no parallel in the French text, nor any significant omission in the Greek translation to motivate the use of the Greek phrase. In spite of its superficially

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Imb.: 'Imberios and Margarona', ed. E. Kriaras, *Βυζαντινὰ ἱπποτικὰ μυθιστορήματα* (Athens, 1956), pp. 213–32;

Lib.: *Le Roman de Libistros et Rhodamne*, ed. J. A. Lambert (Amsterdam, 1935);

Phlor: 'Phlorios and Platzia-phlora', ed. E. Kriaras, *Βυζαντινὰ ἱπποτικὰ μυθιστορήματα* (Athens, 1956), pp. 141–77;

Tam.: *Θρῆνος περὶ Ταμυρλάννου*, ed. G. Wagner, *Mediaeval Greek Texts* (London, 1870), pp. 105–9;

Troas: *A Byzantine Iliad*, eds. L. Norgaard and O. L. Smith (Copenhagen, 1975);

Thren.: *Ἅλωσις τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, ed. G. Wagner, *Mediaeval Greek Texts* (London, 1870), pp. 141–70.

Negative statements – that we have been unable to find other examples of a given phrase – are of course impossible to substantiate. We have searched carefully through the texts listed above and several others, but it is likely that readers may turn up cases that we have missed.

35. *War of Troy* 372 (cf. 1381), 1099 (cf. 2753), 1112 (cf. 2772), 1486 (cf. 3567), 1896 (cf. 4665), 4846 (cf. 11672), 5212 (cf. 12436), 5378 (cf. 12863), 7407 (cf. 16894), 8241 (cf. 18860), 8248 (cf. 18877), 11019 (cf. 24252), 12084 (cf. 26003). *Ach.* 1552; *Chron. Mor.* 203, 482, 548, 753, 845, 1092, 1734, 2524, 2923, 4055, 4842, 8569; *Tam.* 80.

personal nature, *Τί νὰ λέγω τὰ πολλά*; is as much of a cliché as *μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης*.

Another phrase whose formulaic status is beyond dispute is *πηδᾶ καβαλικεύει* (ten examples in the *War of Troy* and many elsewhere).[36] The meaning of these words prevents them from being used as a line-filler, because they describe a specific event in the story of the poem. They are usually paralleled in the French by words for mounting or riding a horse, or both. It is quite a striking phrase, far from the most obvious combination of words, surely, to express this action. So frequently is it found, however, that its unusual quality is blunted by familiarity. It seems unlikely that this particular phrase should have been made up by several different poets simultaneously without a common source in oral tradition. This is an addition to our list of traditional formulas, and its distinctive quality and wide occurrence add to our theoretical arguments for an oral background to this whole genre of poetry.

When a repeated phrase is less striking, the case for oral-formulaic origin, though not self-evident, may still be strong. For *ἐδῶκαν κονταρέας*, for example, there are twenty cases in the *War of Troy* and twenty-four other similar examples like *καὶ κονταρεὰν τοῦ ἔδωκεν* or *καὶ κονταρὲς ἐδώκασιν*, where the phrase is adapted for the first half of the line.[37] Similar phrases occur in both halves of the line in several other poems.[38] These words, it must be admitted, are a simple, literal description of

36. See our list in E. and M. Jeffreys, op. cit., p. 143; Holton, op. cit., p. 56; Mohay, op. cit., p. 177; Spadaro, op. cit., p. 325.

37. For *ἐδῶκαν κονταρέας*, etc.: *War of Troy* 911 (cf. 2398–9), 3122 (cf. 7476–7), 3534 (cf. 8605), 3728 (cf. 9007), 3739 (cf. 9025), 4037 (cf. 9885), 4058 (cf. 9932), 4517 (cf. 10915), 4767 (cf. 11523–4), 5047 (cf. 12099), 6789 (cf. 15738–9), 6897 (cf. 15930), 7473 (cf. 17137), 7501 (cf. 17210–1), 9488 (cf. 21142), 10711 (cf. 23602–3), 10718 (cf. 23625), 10783 (cf. 23753–4), 10857 (cf. 23907), 11030 (cf. 24285). For *καὶ κονταρέαν τοῦ ἔδωκε*, etc.: 3042 (cf. 7309–10), 3479 (cf. 8496), 3791 (cf. 9140), 4139 (cf. 10081–2), 4488 (cf. 10854), 4705 (cf. 11364–5), 5066 (cf. 12136–8), 5988 (cf. 14005–6), 6215 (cf. 14461–3), 6743 (cf. 15642–4), 6843 (cf. 15834–5), 7549 (cf. 17299), 8140 (cf. 18608–9), 9666 (cf. 21494–6), 10315 (cf. 22723–5), 10731 (cf. 23650); for *κονταρέαν ἐδώκασι*, etc.: 987 (cf. 2560), 3522 (cf. 8579), 4431 (cf. 10697–8), 4447 (cf. 10735), 5026 (cf. 12051–2), 6773 (cf. 15692–4), 9398 (cf. 20991–2), 9714 (cf. 21577–8).

38. *Ach.* 1333, 1498; *Belis.* 456; *Chron. Mor.* 1123, 4020, 5034, 5123, 7047; *Imb.* 126, 311, 415; *Lib.* 2273, 2315, 3221; *Phlor.* 667; *Troas* 938.

132

the beginnings of most of the knightly combats that are so common in the remains of early demotic verse. In the *War of Troy*, the phrase is often parallel to the word 'lance' or one of its synonyms in the French original, but just as often there is only a verb indicating fighting, like 'joster'. In view of the other evidence for formulaic phrases in this genre of poetry, we have no hesitation in claiming that ἐδῶκαν κονταρέας was a part of the repertoire of many fourteenth-century oral poets. But cases like this, argued on the basis of numbers alone, are less satisfactory than those where one can point to qualitative evidence like the unusual nature of the phrase itself or of the contexts in which it is found.

This last category of evidence, the situations in which the formula is found, is rarely decisive in itself but can be a useful supplementary argument. For example, all but two of the 28 examples of the phrase ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν found in the *War of Troy* refer to a day of battle,[39] in a way reminiscent of the English expression 'win the day'. Did the poet himself restrict the phrase to this context, or was this suggested to him by Benoit's division of his battles into days? There is some similar evidence from other poems, though it is much less clear than that from the *War of Troy* itself.[40] By reasoning in such a way, one may suggest a specific oral meaning even for this most simple and generalized of phrases.

The words πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν, found 18 times in the *War of Troy*,[41] we have not found elsewhere, and so they will have no

39. 3072 (cf. 7372), 3166 (cf. 7545), 3181 (cf. 7565), 3188 (cf. 7585), 4152 (cf. 10110), 4627 (cf. 11201), 4761 (cf. 11509), 4807 (cf. 11596), 5344 (cf. 12718–20), 5330 (cf. 12731), 5996 (cf. 14014), 6194 (cf. 14394), 6229 (cf. 14507), 6830 (cf. 15809), 6896 (cf. 15930), 6929 (cf. 16008), 6942 (cf. 16029), 6950 (cf. 16037), 7148 (cf. 16373), 8292 (cf. 18968), 8380 (cf. 19090), 8930 (cf. 20020), 10328 (cf. 22754), 10820 (cf. 23818), 11916 (cf. 25756), 12636 (cf. 26940). The exceptions are: 6910 (cf. 15966), 13104 (cf. 27706).

40. See *Chron. Mor.* 1111, 1159; the phrase is used for a rest-day from battle at *Chron. Mor.* 1478, 5468, 8865; it can also be used in laments, for the dread day on which the City was captured or the leader slain: *Tam.* 7; *Thren.* 50, 62, 102.

41. 3132 (cf. 7497), 3468 (cf. 8463), 5204 (cf. 12424), 6034 (cf. 14091), 6774 (cf. 15698), 7499 (cf. 17208), 8199 (cf. 18783), 8982 (cf. 20128), 9194 (cf. 20482), 9415 (cf. 21024), 9462 (cf. 21101), 9478 (cf. 21123), 9985 (cf. 22192), 10345 (cf. 22794), 10712 (cf. 23605), 10728 (cf. 23639), 10891 (cf. 23970), 13926 (cf. 30106).

133

value as evidence unless their use within this poem is examined in some detail. We must divide the phrase into its two associated concepts: πολλά indicating a number, and εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν suggesting an event which happens quickly. Nine times in the French original corresponding to these Greek words there is a phrase which refers to a short period of time: 'En petit d'ore' (12424 = *War of Troy* 5204; 21101 = 9462; 23639 = 10728); 'En poi d'ore' (22192 = 9985; 23604 = 10711); 'En poi d'ore e en poi de tens' (21123 = 9478; 21000 = 9403); 'En poi de tens' (20482 = 9194); 'En mout poi d'ore' (21024 = 9415). The idea of number is even more pervasive: in 16 of the 19 cases there is a number or a word expressing number (tant, maint, mout) in the French text, reflected by a similar expression in Greek, nearly always found in the first half of the line which ends πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν. In fact in all 16 cases the number-word is translated separately into Greek, outside the πολλά of the formula. Further, when the two ideas appear together in the French they are rarely combined in such a way as to suggest translation by the Greek formula. They are often in different lines, divided by other parts of the sentence. Πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν has often the status of a comment added by the Greek translator without much motivation from the French original. Yet there is only one case where neither of these two ideas is present anywhere in the French to set off the Greek formula: 'La remestrent vuit le cheval' (23970), translated into Greek as τὰς σέλας τους εὐκαίρεσαν, πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν (10891).

If one looks beyond these verbal triggers to the contexts in which the phrase is found, it is immediately clear that circumstances proved a more certain clue to its use than words. Each of these 19 phrases occurs at a moment of high military achievement. It is a formula to point to a Homeric ἀρίστεια. The usual type is that like the achievement of the second Ajax – πλέον τῶν εἴκοσι ἐσκότωσε, πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν (10345) where there are numbers for his victims also in the French original ('Plus en a mort de vint e dous' 22794). But the situation is the same in the lines without numbers: at 9478–9 (cf. 21123–4) Achilles is routing the Trojans, while at 10728 (cf. 23639) Pentachilia (Penthesileia) is striding through the smaller combats after her triumph over Diomedes. In 10891, quoted above, Ajax is routing the Paphlagonians. It seems plain that the formula

134

means more to the poet, and is intended to convey more to his audience, than the sum of its words. It brings with it an automatic context – the climax of a battle. How could this association of ideas have arisen? It is tempting to speculate that it did not derive from the translator himself or a written source, but had been developed in his mind and the expectations of his audience under the influence of oral verse.[42] The association would seem to us easier to understand if it predated the poem rather than developed in the course of the translation. However, in the absence of other surviving occurrences of the phrase outside the *War of Troy*, the argument is far from conclusive.

At first sight, the phrase ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν σωμάτων, found 13 times in the *War of Troy*[43] and not to our knowledge elsewhere, seems to belong to the same category as πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν. Ten of the examples occur in a battle context, with the ground strewn with dead bodies. In each of these cases, the noun γῆ and the verb καταστρώνω appear in the first half of the line, equally divided between active and passive constructions. The remaining three cases are found after the battle narrative, when the dead bodies are so decayed that they constitute a serious health hazard, and a truce is arranged for their removal. It seems therefore that this phrase brings with it two possible contextual associations rather than the single one of πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν. But when we examine the parallel phrases in the French original, we find that they are disturbingly close to the Greek. Ten times the French contains the word 'mort' ('morz'), while there are single examples of 'cors' and 'abatuz'. Of the ten cases where the line includes the word καταστρώνω, four are paralleled by 'couvrir' and four by 'jonchier'. 'Des morz est la terre coverte' occurs twice (15734, cf. 6788; 21122, cf. 9476), together with 'La terre est coverte des morz' (2617, cf. 1018), 'Tote la terre des morz cuevrent' (7246, cf. 3024), 'Des morz sont tuit li champ jonchié' (12837, cf. 5398), 'Des morz est toz li chans jonchiez' (16154, cf. 7004). This Greek phrase, whatever

42. This pattern of argument has been developed in connection with the Homeric poems; see e.g., M. N. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), pp. 27–63.

43. 1018 (cf. 2617), 3024 (cf. 7246), 5058 (cf. 12123–5), 5380 (cf. 12810–1), 5398 (cf. 12837), 6788 (cf. 15734), 6824 (cf. 15793–4), 7004 (cf. 16154), 7259 (cf. 16626), 8917 (cf. 20002–5), 9350 (cf. 20873–4), 9366 (cf. 20920–1), 9476 (cf. 21122).

135

its source, certainly corresponds rather closely to the French passages from which it was translated. While πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν is frequently an addition to the Greek narrative, redundant in the sense that all the ideas of the French have been translated elsewhere into Greek, ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν σωμάτων is always an essential part of the translated text. In these circumstances it seems more probable that the formula was constructed by the translator on the basis of the French than that it was drawn from a Greek oral tradition.

This is even more likely with a pair of formulas which are among the most noticeable in the poem, those which make up the line τὸ σκουτάριν ἐπέρασεν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ λουρίκιν. There are seven cases of this formula pair, singular and plural, with or without an indirect object pronoun.[44] Those who have read the poem will be surprised at this small number, because one has the impression that nearly every single combat includes this phrase, as a hero is killed or escapes with a wound. In fact, when one looks more closely, there are a further 9 cases where σκουτάρι and περνῶ appear in the first half of the line and λουρίκι in the second, e.g. τὸ σκουτάρι (του) ἐπέρασεν καὶ ὅλον τὸ λουρίκιν (3142, 3612) and περνάει τὸ σκουτάρι του ἀλλὰ (ὁμοίως) καὶ τὸ λουρίκιν (3410, 5032);[45] two more cases where κόβω is substituted for περνῶ, e.g. τὸ σκουτάρι του ἔκοψαν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ λουρίκιν (4648);[46] and four cases where σκουτάρι, περνῶ and λουρίκι are all found grouped within a line and a half, e.g.

περνάει τὸ σκουτάρι του ὅλον τὸ πανιτσέλιν
εἰς τὸ λουρίκι τὸ καλὸν ἐτρίβη τὸ κοντάριν (4720–1).[47]

The two formulaic phrases here seem very unstable. Much more durable is the sequence of σκουτάρι and λουρίκι, usually accompanied by περνῶ.

Of the 22 French phrases parallel to those mentioned in the

44. *War of Troy* 3643 (cf. 8843–9), 3792 (cf. 9137–8), 4655 (cf. 11251–2), 6078 (cf. 14153–5), 6744 (cf. 15642–5), 6747 (cf. 15647–8), 10965 (cf. 24124–5).

45. See also *War of Troy* 3044 (cf. 7309–11), 4757 (cf. 11500–3), 4767 (cf. 11531–2), 5047 (cf. 12102), 7502 (cf. 17213).

46. See also *War of Troy* 11010 (cf. 24231–3).

47. *War of Troy* 4138–9 (cf. 10084–6), 7474–5 (cf. 17139–40), 3406–7 (cf. 8337–41).

136

last paragraph,[48] 21 contain the word 'escu' and one 'targe', leaving only one without an equivalent for σκουτάρι. Equally, 14 have the word 'hauberc', the direct equivalent of λουρίκι. Most of the rest refer to a second piece of armour, usually the helmet or gloves. The French passage is usually at least two lines, sometimes even four or five lines, regularly reduced to one in Greek. Repetition is rare in the French: 'E par l'auberc maillié menu' (8345, 11252) and 'E son (Li ot l') auberc si desmaillié' (9138, 10085). Thus, though formulas in the sense we have defined them above are almost completely absent, there is an underlying pattern of narration by which a knight's spear pierces first his opponent's shield and then another part of his armour, usually the breast-plate. There are several supporting examples of the pattern at points where they have not triggered the Greek formula.[49]

Thus there is great similarity between the two poets in their approach to this battle segment. The content of the Greek formula and its associated phrases could easily be derived from a reading of the French. In fact, since we have found no similar phrases in other Greek poems, it is much more likely that these formulas are the translator's own coinage than that he derived them from oral poetry. Though it is worth repeating that the pressure demanding the creation of a formula for these actions must have been the pressure of a background oral tradition, the formula itself seems to have resulted from the poet's own reading of the French text.

In these last few pages we have attempted to define several stages on the continuum of formula types found in the *War of Troy*, and to give an example or two of each category, from those which we regard as certainly derived from an oral tradition to those which we believe to have been invented by the poet under oral pressure. For none of these stages have we attempted a complete list. The questions which we asked thus remain unanswered: it is not yet possible to use formula lists from this genre of poems to sketch out the subjects and narrative patterns

48. Add to those given in notes 44–7 above: 7513, 8344–5, 8784–5, 11239–40, 11394–7, 12059–62.

49. E.g. 14003–6, 21494–6, 2579–80; cf. the similar pattern where the spear pierces the shield but is *stopped* by the breastplate; e.g. 9012–3, 10697–700, 11359–63.

137

of the underlying oral tradition. We have not yet even been able to come to precise conclusions about the relationship of the *War of Troy* to this tradition. We cannot yet say where on the continuum the majority of its formulas lie – though we hope that we have provided a structure within which an answer may be built. All those who study early demotic verse accept that it contains some clichés, some phrases which recur so frequently throughout the corpus that they plainly had an independent existence beyond the particular examples which survive. The basic question which remains to be answered is how far this principle may be taken. Or to put it in the oral-formulaic terms used in this study: what proportion of the repetitions are the poets' own formulaic phrases, and what proportion did they take from oral tradition?

We have suggested that the *War of Troy* is a transitional text between oral and literary composition. The poet has adopted a formulaic style and many of the formulas themselves form a tradition of oral poetry; at the same time he seems to have added clichés of his own and to have used all his formulas in a literate manner in making a long translation from a French manuscript. It is worth adding here, as was mentioned in the case of the *Chronicle of the Morea*, that there are no units of oral organization longer than a pair of formulaic half-lines. The motifs and themes found in a wide range of oral poems ancient, mediaeval and modern, and often used as part of the definition of the oral style,[50] seem to have had little effect on the early demotic Greek tradition. We can do no more than suggest reasons for this lack. Perhaps thematic organization did exist in the pure oral form but has disappeared in the writing down. Perhaps this is the major effect of the partial transition to a conventional written literary form. In the case of the *War of Troy* and of other translations within this group of poems, one may suggest that the French (or Italian) original was an adequate guide for the structure of the narrative, freeing the poet from the need to rely on thematic construction.

50. This is stated or implied by, e.g., Lord, *Singer*, 68–98; A. C. Baugh, 'Improvisation in the Middle English Romance', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CIII (1959), 440–54; K. Kailasapathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 187–228; J. J. Duggan, *The Song of Roland* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), pp. 160–212; B. Peabody, *The Winged Word* (Albany, 1975), pp. 179–215.

138

The examination of other similarly translated works is one of the ways in which the problems we have raised in this paper may be brought closer to solution. Their differing patterns of connection with their sources, particularly the ways in which Greek formulas are related to corresponding phrases in the originals, will serve to put into context the conclusions which we have drawn in this study. But above all, a collection must be made of the formulas which are common to several early demotic texts – and which must thus be ascribed to oral sources. A half-line found, say, more than once in each of three independent poems of this type is much more likely to have belonged to an oral tradition than to have been constructed independently three times, even if it is a somewhat banal expression. A collection of such phrases would help in the discussion of the nature of the tradition, its form and its subject matter. It would also be a useful means of preventing formulaic clichés being misused in discussion of literary indebtedness between these poems.

It is unfortunate that most of the early remains of demotic Greek survive in a literary (not to mention linguistic) form which is neither easy to evaluate nor attractive to the twentieth-century reader. The lack of literary originality in plot and use of language is rarely compensated by signs of non-literary liveliness and inspiration such as seem to survive in much Western mediaeval poetry. The reason, we would suggest, is that these poems are rarely directly based on genuine oral material. Thus the oral style is employed for a number of different purposes for which it is not fully appropriate. In this sense, we believe that most early demotic Greek literature consists of transitional texts. Research along the lines we have suggested will provide an analysis of the interaction between oral and written methods of composition which could be useful in other mediaeval literatures. It is unlikely to establish this genre as of high merit in literary terms but it will permit a much greater understanding of the poems and appreciation of the qualities which they do possess.

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